Strategic objectives met by visit of USS Nimitz

2333. SHRI MAHMOOD A. MADANI: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government extended invitation to the US Government regarding the docking of USS Nimitz;

(b) if so, the reason for such invite;

(c) what were the strategic and other objectives met by such a visit by USS Nimitz; and

(d) did any exercise or interaction take place between the two Navies during the docking of the USS Nimitz?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Request for the visit of USS Nimitz was made by the Government of USA.

(c) Port calls are routinely made by all navies, including the Indian Navy. The policy on the port calls by foreign naval vessels does not exclude nuclear-powered vessels from calling at Indian ports with the permission of the Indian Government.

(d) The Indian Navy did not carry out any naval exercise with the US Navy during the port call of USS Nimitz at Chennai in July, 2007. However, interaction with US naval personnel on board USS Nimitz took place.

Supply of IITs to OEF, Dehradun

2334. SHRI PRASANTA CHATTERJEE:
SHRI TAPAN KUMAR SEN:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether production of night vision device in Opto Electronics Factory, Dehradun is being affected because of irregular supply of Image Intensifier Tubes (IIT); and

(b) if so, the reasons therefor and action taken to ensure uninterrupted supply of IITs to the production units?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) There has been some delay in supply of Image Intensifier tube due to nonavailability of imported components. Action has been taken to ensure timely availability of Image Intensifier Tubes at Opto Electronics Factory, Dehradun.

Ordnance factory at Nalanda

2335. PROF. ALKA BALRAM KSHATRIYA:
KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE:

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an ordnance factory is to be set up at Nalanda, the holiest place of Buddhists, the symbol of peace and non-violence;

(b) whether Government are aware that Budhists from all over the world are shocked at this happening; and

(c) whether Government propose to shift the said factory to some other part of Bihar?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI RAO INDERJIT SINGH): (a) Yes, Sir. An ordnance factory is being set up in Nalanda District.

(b) There have been some representations on this issue. But the establishment of ordnance factory will not cause any damage to the protected archaeological sites in the area. Requisite clearance has also been taken from Archaeological Survey of India.

(c) No, Sir.

Construction of road link to Mt. Everest by China

2336. SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken cognizance of the proposed plan by China to create road link up to Mt. Everest;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government has also taken into cognizance infrastructure and increased linkages being created on the Chinese side of the border that could be used for military purpose;

(d) what steps have been taken to improve the all weather connectivity and linkages on the Indian side; and

(e) what steps are being taken to create such linkages in the disturbed regions along the border?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY): (a) to (e) Xinhua (official Chinese news agency) reported on 19th June, 2007 that China would begin budding a "highway" on Mount Everest in Tibet Autonomous Region so as to ease the path of those bearing the Olympic torch. Construction of the road will kick off at Everest Base Camp. The project aims to turn a 108 km rough road linking Tingri County of Xigaze prefecture at the foot of the mountain to the Base Camp into a blacktop highway fenced by undulating guardrails. The Government keeps a constant watch on all developments having a bearing on India's security and takes all necessary measures to safeguard it. Infrastructure development is an ongoing process and the same is carried in a phased manner.

Discriminatory treatment to civilians in defence headquarter

2337. SHRI MOTIUR RAHMAN: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether civilians working in Defence Headquarters perform duties not lower than those performed by men in uniform;

(b) if so, the reasons for discriminating between the civilians and denying them the facilities the men in uniform avail even after retirement;